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SUBJECT: JAPANESE FOREIGN MINISTER'S VISIT TO PAKISTAN

Classified By: Ambassador J. Thomas Schieffer for reasons 1.4(b) and (d)
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11. (C) SUMMARY: Japanese Foreign Minister Masahiko Koumura visited Pakistan May 2-4, where he met with senior government and political figures. According to a MOFA debriefing, the major goal of his visit was to signal Japan's strong support for Pakistan through two messages. First, the stability and development of Pakistan is directly linked to the peace and stability of the Asian region and of the international community as a whole. Japan supports the new Pakistani government and its efforts to address Pakistan's political and economic challenges. Second, fighting terrorism, consolidating democracy, and achieving sustainable economic growth are more important than ever, and Japan and the international community look forward to the concerted efforts Pakistan will make to address these challenges. In this regard, Japan is committed to provide its utmost support to Pakistan's efforts. During his visit, Koumura met separately the morning of May 3 with President Musharraf, Prime Minister Gilani, and Foreign Minister Qureshi, each for 30 minutes. He then was hosted by FM Qureshi at a working lunch prior to a signing ceremony for a yen loan agreement worth approximately USD 460 million. That afternoon, he met with co-chair of the PPP Asif Zardari, Federal Interior Advisor Rahman Malik, and PML-N leadership. END SUMMARY.

12. (C) In his meeting with President Musharraf, Koumura congratulated Pakistan for consolidating its drive toward democracy with a peaceful general election. This was a major achievement, he said, particularly given the political events of the previous six months, which included demonstrations, terrorist attacks, the declaration of a state of emergency, and the assassination of former Prime Minister Benazir Bhutto. Koumura told Musharraf that Japan will make the utmost efforts to support Pakistan's consolidation of democracy, struggle against terrorism, and efforts to achieve sustainable development. The yen loan, valued at USD 480 million, was double the amount of Japan's last yen loan to Pakistan in January 2006, is a tangible demonstration of Tokyo's strong interest in supporting Pakistan.

13. (C) President Musharraf replied by expressing his gratitude for Japan's support, including the yen loans, the dispatching of election monitors during the general election, assistance rendered following the earthquake of 2005, and support for Pakistan's entry into ASEM. He told Koumura he wants to increase annual bilateral trade with Japan to the USD 2 billion mark, and expressed Pakistan's firm commitment to fight terrorism. Musharraf said Pakistan's fight against terrorists is based on three measures. First, Pakistan will take decisive action against terrorists. Second, political dialogue is possible and will be pursued with ordinary citizens who have grievances, but not with those who engage

in acts of terror. Third, Pakistan seeks to improve the lives of its citizens by promoting social welfare and economic programs. Koumura replied that Pakistan could count on Japan's help with the third.

¶4. (C) Prime Minister Gilani thanked Koumura for Japan's support and briefed him on political developments. He, like Musharraf, stressed Pakistan's commitment to defeat the terrorists and said no agreement would be possible with extremists unless they first abandoned their weapons. He said efforts launched by the previous government to develop the tribal areas would continue with emphasis being placed on improving the social, educational, and medical environments for the people. He also mentioned briefly the issues created by Afghan refugees and food shortages. Koumura sought to impress upon Gilani the need for a global nonproliferation regime.

¶5. (C) For his part, Foreign Minister Qureshi thanked Koumura for the participation of Japan's Maritime Self Defense Forces refueling vessels in Operation Enduring Freedom. He also said Pakistan was grateful for ballot boxes and observers sent by Japan for the general election. Koumura again raised the subject of nonproliferation and expressed concerns about recent Pakistani missile tests. Qureshi took note of these concerns and replied that as a responsible member of the international community, Pakistan does not want to see the proliferation of nuclear weapons.

¶6. (C) During the MOFA debriefing, no mention was made of any substantive discussions Koumura may have had with other officials or political party leaders. Likewise, at a separate meeting between Political Officer and MOFA Southwest Asia Division Principal Deputy Director Masaki Ishikawa, no information was provided on these other meetings other than an assurance that they were simply courtesy calls.
SCHIEFFER